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J.R. Smith Pinx.

R. Cooper Sculp.

John Hunter & Herbert

Surgeons & Anatomists

Born Decr 1733 - - - - - Died Oct. 1793.

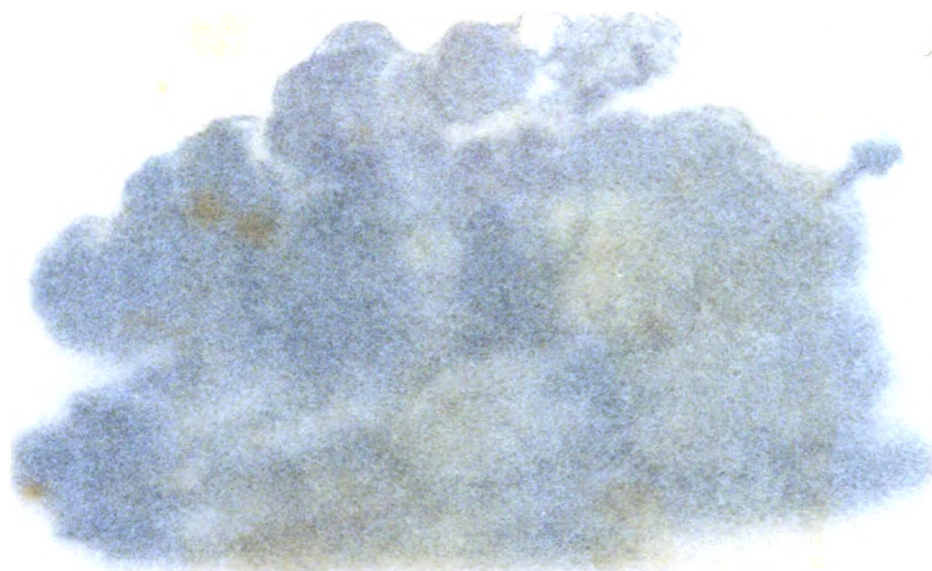
J.H. 1879

AN ACCOUNT

OF

PAINTING IN OLD

THE CONARIBEL



1879



J.H. 1879

AN ACCIDENCE,
OR
GAMUT,
OF
PAINTING IN OIL.

BY JULIUS CÆSAR IBBETSON.



SECOND EDITION.

WITH A BRIEF MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE;
AND HIS PORTRAIT, ENGRAVED BY R. COOPER, FROM A PAINTING BY J. R. SMITH.
ALSO, HIS METHOD OF PREPARING GUMTION, FOR RENDERING EVERY COLOUR TRANSPARENT;
WITH OTHER RECIPES, NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.

London:
PUBLISHED BY HARVEY AND DARTON, GRACECHURCH-STREET.

1828.



TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
LADY ELIZABETH KEITH LINDSAY.

MADAM,

I HAVE presumed to take the liberty of dedicating the following little work (entirely novel in its kind) to your Ladyship; and I have the confidence to think that it will not be displeasing to you, because the possibility of it was first suggested to me by the Right Honourable the Countess of Balcarras and yourself, during my short residence in your neighbourhood, at Roslyn, in the summer of 1800, the remembrance of which will always excite in me the most pleasing sensations. It was there I formed the design of attempting to be of service to those who were setting out in the arduous undertaking of Painting in Oil; the difficulty of which, without assistance, no one knows better than myself, who never had the benefit of the least instruction in the art; and have, on that account, to lament the loss of years of my life, which, by the help of something like the following, I might have turned to account. The very extraordinary progress which your Ladyship had made (in addition to every other accomplishment and acquirement) in painting, without a

a master, induced me, at your request, to put down in tints the simple method I made use of. I was highly gratified and flattered by your immediately comprehending what was then but very imperfectly exhibited : I have ever since been turning the affair in my mind, and studying how to make myself clearly understood; and what follows, appears to me to be the best method. If it meets with your Ladyship's approbation, and contributes ever so little to your Ladyship's improvement or amusement, it will give the greatest satisfaction to

Your Ladyship's most obliged,

most devoted humble Servant,

JULIUS IBBETSON.

MEMOIR
OF
THE AUTHOR'S LIFE.

IN re-publishing the following little work on Oil Painting, a memoir of its author (accompanied as it is by a most striking likeness) may not be unacceptable, to those who feel an interest in the subject of which it treats. Indeed, the desire to know something of the private history of persons of talent is so general, that apology seems unnecessary, unless for the incompetence of the biographer to communicate that interest to it, which it would have derived from an abler pen.

Richard Ibbetson, the father of the artist, was by birth a Yorkshireman ; but, in his youth, a resident in London. About the same time, the Moravians, a Christian sect newly-arrived in this country, attracted some notice ; and their peculiar manners and habits were a subject of ridicule with many, among whom was Ibbetson. However, having been once induced to attend their chapel, he was so much impressed by the evident piety of the people, and by the simplicity of their mode of worship, that the scoffer became a convert. He joined their fraternity immediately, accompanied them to Yorkshire, and was one of the first inhabitants of their establishment at Fulneck, where he resided many years as a single brother. When upwards of fifty, he became enamoured of a very young woman, the daughter of Julius Mortimer, a neighbouring farmer, and married her. For this he was formally expelled, as the members of their society were not permitted to choose a partner for themselves ; but he continued to attend divine service at their chapel, and occasionally played the organ, being a great proficient in music.

The first fruit of his marriage was a daughter, long since dead ; and secondly, the subject of this memoir. In consequence of an injury received by a fall on the ice, when in an

advanced stage of pregnancy, his mother died in premature labour, at the age of nineteen; and her infant was brought into the world by the Cæsarian operation, on the 29th of December, 1759: hence his name of Julius Cæsar.

He received the first part of his education from the Moravians; and afterwards, on his father's removal to Leeds, was sent to the Quaker's school in that town. From his earliest years he discovered a decided predilection for the arts, and a degree of susceptibility and enthusiasm which could not be repressed. It is not easy to distinguish ardent inclination from genius; but, from whatever his inspiration proceeded, nothing could deter him from his purpose. Artists were at that time not numerous in England, and perhaps in Yorkshire none of any eminence were to be found.

His father, in the choice of a profession for his son, wishing as much as possible to gratify his inclination, apprenticed him to Mr. John Fletcher, of Hull, ship-painter, a very ingenious and worthy man, who, in the most friendly manner, communicated all he knew of the business, which was little more than the mechanical part. But the extraordinary talent which Ibbetson evinced, in the invention of appropriate ornament for shipping, &c. which was then the rage, first brought him into notice; added to this, he designed and painted the scenery for a dramatic piece called "The Genii," in a very masterly manner, for the *old* Tate Wilkinson, then manager of the York and Hull Theatres, which gained him a sort of celebrity, undoubtedly calculated to flatter the vanity and stimulate the ambition of a boy, then only in his seventeenth year.

He possessed also talents, which, had they been cultivated, might have gained distinction for him as an actor; and Tate Wilkinson, who was a man of great discernment, aware of the treasure such a youth would have been to him, left no means untried to induce Ibbetson to turn his thoughts to the stage, both whilst he remained in Hull, and after he went to London. In the year 1777, Mr. Fletcher declined business in favour of his brother; and Ibbetson, not choosing to be transferred along with the rest of the stock and fixtures, set out for the metropolis on the top of a stage-coach, without friends, without introduction, almost without money, and only in the eighteenth year of his age. Under such circumstances, it will not excite surprise that he laboured unknown for several years: the only wonder is, that he ever emerged from obscurity; but "talent, like water, will find its level." Chance introduced him to Mr. Clarke, picture-dealer, Leicester Fields, in whose employ he continued seven years; during which time he acquired great knowledge of pictures, particularly

those of the Flemish and Dutch schools. He also became thoroughly acquainted with the deceptions of picture-dealing, as it was at *that time* carried on; and used frequently to repeat, with infinite humour, innumerable anecdotes on the subject. About the year 1780, his comforts were increased by entering into a matrimonial connexion; but those comforts were soon intermixed with cares, for every year added to the number of his family, to all of whom, as well as their mother, he was fondly attached. By an extraordinary fatality he lost eight of his children in succession: only three, two sons and one daughter, survived their mother, who died in 1794. Many years previous to this event he had removed to Kilburn, where he devoted himself to the study of nature: he painted pictures and made drawings, principally of cattle and rustic figures, always original, and many of them possessing great merit. These were disposed of for very inadequate prices to the dealers, whose interest it was to prevent his name or residence from being known; until he accidentally became acquainted with Captain Baillie, then commissioner of stamps, a gentleman of acknowledged taste in the arts, who soon afterwards introduced him to the Earls of Bute and Warwick, the Honourable R. F. and Charles Greville, brothers of the last-named nobleman, and to many others whose friendship and society he prized, even more than their patronage.

From this time his prospects began to brighten: his society was much sought, and equally as much admired as his painting. With a retentive memory and a lively imagination, extensive reading and acute observation, he possessed more varied information than is generally attained by those whose time is devoted to professional pursuits.

He passed a summer at Steep Hill, Isle of Wight, with Mr. Tollemache, afterwards Lord Dysart. He always spoke of that visit with pleasure; as, in the society he there met with, the polish of the first circles was in many instances united to the highest talents. Another pleasing event, was an excursion through Wales with Lord Bute, where they visited many of the resident gentry, and passed a considerable time at Cardiff Castle; of which, and the neighbouring scenery, he painted pictures for his Lordship. He also spent much time with that nobleman, at his seat, Hallinbury Forest. Indeed, a long period was passed unprofitably, in the society of the great, which ought to have been devoted to the practice of his profession; consequently, the patronage of which he was so justly proud, and which excited the envy of many, was not so beneficial as it ought to have been.

In 1788, he was applied to by Mr. Charles Greville, to go as draughtsman to an

embassy to China, with the Honourable Colonel Cathcart, in the *Vestal* frigate, Captain Sir R. J. Strachan. Though his objections to leave his family were strong, they were overruled by his friends : he accepted the offer, and was indefatigable in making drawings at Madeira, the Cape, Southern Africa, Java, &c.

Unfortunately, after a lingering illness, the ambassador died in the Straits of Banca, and was interred in the island of Java. As no successor could be appointed, unless they had reached Macao, the *Vestal* returned immediately to England ; and what was still more unfortunate for Ibbetson, he knew not to whom to apply for remuneration on his return, as his appointment had been merely a verbal one. The loss of a whole year of his time, and the expenses incurred by himself and family, were serious ; but he was led to hope, the patronage of the relations of Colonel Cathcart would compensate him. In some measure that hope was realized ; but when involved in difficulties, it is not easy to retrieve. The only advantage he derived from his voyage, was the intimate acquaintance he had obtained of the characters and habits of British sailors ; and he painted, with the greatest spirit and truth, some admirable pictures of their frolics when on shore, as well as of their sufferings by shipwreck. There was a peculiar smartness of handling, both in his sketches and finished pictures, which was much admired and imitated. Her Royal Highness the Princess Elizabeth honoured him by copying a portrait of John Smith, a celebrated Welch Harper, and was pleased to express her admiration of his talents. He painted some pictures for Boydell's *Shakespeare* ; and, about this period, commenced the series of drawings for the "*Cabinet of Quadrupeds*," engraved by Tookey, and published by Darton and Harvey. The last-mentioned work has not been surpassed, during thirty years of progressive improvement, in elegance of design or beauty of engraving. Ibbetson made a second tour through Wales, with the Honourable R. F. Greville, and Mr. John Smith the artist ; when he collected abundant subject for his pencil, and visited many of the principal families, amongst whom was Mr. Johnnes, of bibliomaniacal celebrity, at his delightful seat at Haffod, where they spent a considerable time, occasionally making excursive visits to various parts of the surrounding country. During their stay at Haffod, Mr. Johnnes became so much attached to Ibbetson, that he gave him a general invitation to his table when in London, and continued a correspondence with him many years after Ibbetson settled in Westmoreland.

To compensate him for the loss and disappointment experienced from his voyage under

Colonel Cathcart, his friends procured for him an offer of an appointment, upon a very different footing, in Lord Macartney's embassy to China ; but he felt such a rooted antipathy to engage in any undertaking of the kind a second time, that nothing could induce him to accept it. He recommended a pupil of his own, (Mr. William Alexander,) whose drawings, published in Sir George Staunton's account of that embassy, so much in the style of Ibbetson, prove how well he was fitted for the undertaking.

Ibbetson's mind was formed for the enjoyment of friendship and domestic comfort, in a more than common degree : his feelings, upon all occasions, were morbidly sensitive, his attachments sincere and ardent, his joy excessive, his grief bordering upon despair. On the death of his wife a brain fever attacked him, and deprived his three remaining children of all consolation or support from their only parent ; and, for many weeks, it was matter of doubt whether he would long survive their mother. When he did at length recover from a bed of sickness, he found the *disinterested friends* and *faithful servants*, who attended him during his illness, besides living at his expense, had plundered him of every portable article. With returning strength came the conviction of the necessity of exertion for the support of his family : he disposed of the little property that remained, placed his children at school, and went himself into lodgings, which appeared dreary and desolate to one who had been so long accustomed to the comforts of a fireside circle at home.

From this period, and these causes, he was occasionally led into convivial society, which only increased his embarrassments. Some time after this he was employed by the late Lord Mansfield, to make designs for the embellishment of a magnificent apartment at Caen Wood.

This occupied his time for about eighteen months. He afterwards resided at Paddington ; when, being driven to seek his amusements in society, and being naturally too ready, consistently with prudence, to endeavour to relieve distress, it is not surprising that his acquaintances, in some instances, took advantage of this trait in his character, to request his acceptance to bills, and his security for debts, where the parties had no claim whatever upon him.

Having no means of extricating himself, but by withdrawing from those connexions, who, under the name of friends, were preying upon him, he quitted London ; and, in 1798, by the advice of the Messrs. Greville, Sir George Beaumont, and others, who were his well-wishers, he went to Liverpool, under an engagement to paint certain pictures for

Mr. Thomas Vernon, for a stipulated sum, to be paid in six months, and which was sufficient to liquidate all claims upon him. Change of scene, renovated hopes, and happier prospects, rekindled the expiring torch of genius in his breast, and enabled him to produce some of the finest pictures he ever painted. In the autumn of 1798, he visited the Lakes of Westmoreland; and, in 1799, fixed his residence in that paradise of painters and poets. During his stay in Liverpool he became intimately known to many of the leading characters of the day, among whom was Roscoe: in him he found a congenial mind, and in his numerous family he saw all that he had ever pictured to himself of domestic happiness. They corresponded several years, and the misfortunes of that amiable and patriotic man, add one more to the many instances of unrewarded virtue in this world.

On going to Liverpool, his eldest son accompanied him; his youngest was left at school at Chelsea; and his daughter was taken under the immediate protection of Lady Beaumont, with whom she resided after she left school, until her marriage. The expenses of her education were paid by her father.

In 1800, Ibbetson revisited Hull, and was highly gratified by the flattering marks of attention which he received from those friends of his youth who still remained, after more than twenty years' absence. He then sailed for Leith, to join Mr. Vernon, who had an exhibition of pictures in Edinburgh, and, being a stranger, was anxious for Ibbetson's introduction to the patrons of art.

At this time he spent a few weeks with Lady Balcarras and family; and, though delighted with Scottish hospitality, he very soon found it impossible to pursue his studies in Edinburgh, where he had a succession of invitations, and therefore retired to the little village of Roslyn. The security from interruption tempted him to fix upon this quiet retreat; added to which, the fine and romantic scenery of the North Esk was an additional inducement. Lady Balcarras also took lodgings there, that her daughters, the Ladies Elizabeth and Anne Lindsay, might enjoy the advantages of his instruction, in painting from nature. Here he passed his time delightfully until the month of November, when he returned to Westmoreland, to execute numerous commissions for pictures; particularly subjects from Burns's Poems of Tam o'Shanter, Cotter's Saturday Night, Hallow'een, and many others, which are amongst the most vigorous efforts of his mind and pencil.

Upon his return from Scotland, in November, 1800, Ibbetson was solicited most pressing, by Mr. Charles Greville, to go out with Captain Flinders, on a voyage of

discovery along the coast of New South Wales, at a fixed and liberal salary, for three years certain; and, as a further inducement to him to accept the offer, his eldest son might have accompanied him, either as an officer of the ship, (his name having been upon the books as midshipman, from the year 1789), or as assistant draughtsman. He seemed to have a presentiment of the disastrous consequences which attended that undertaking, and he declined the offer; though it might, at one period, have been a very desirable mode of releasing himself from that host of parasites, to whom, in his search from oblivion from his cares, he had become a prey. But those connexions were in a great measure broken by his quitting the metropolis, and prospects of returning comfort began to open to his view. His works had acquired that celebrity which their merit justly entitled them to: his health was improved by temperance; and, having formed a second attachment, he determined to spend his remaining years, amidst those delightful scenes, whose magic effects he transferred by a happy facility to his canvass.

In June, 1801, he married the daughter of Mr. William Thompson, of Windermere, who, though extremely young, had sufficient discernment to perceive and estimate his talents and virtues; this, united to a feeling of compassion for his misfortunes, induced her to overlook the disparity of their years, and determined her to share his fate. They had not been long united, before she was called upon to exert all her fortitude to support her husband under an unlooked-for misfortune. He had entrusted Mr. Vernon to settle every demand upon him in London, and depended upon that person's assurance that every thing was done as he wished, early in the year 1800. In the autumn of the year 1801 he discovered, that, instead of having paid the money, Vernon had made promises, and when these were unavailing, he had given bills, which were dishonoured. Vernon being unable to produce the money, the whole came like an electric shock upon Ibbetson. Yet, so much was he attached to Vernon, that he was persuaded to accept the excuses which the latter made for the breach of confidence he had been guilty of, and trusted to his promises for the future. He continued to send pictures (when they were not painted by order) to Vernon for sale; receiving, occasionally, trifling remittances, with an understanding the remainder would be paid on the sale of those pictures.

In the summer of 1803*, Vernon left Liverpool, *insolvent*; and from that time, Ibbetson

* Just after the publication of the *Accidence on Oil Painting*, in which the author spoke in the highest terms of Vernon's liberality.

never received a guinea from him. His embarrassments, in consequence of this unexpected loss, were very serious. However, he fortunately had commissions from Earl Buchan, Sir Henry Nelthorpe, and several others; amongst whom, Mr. Danby, of Swinton Park, Yorkshire, ought to be mentioned. This gentleman, by his liberal and extensive commissions for pictures, induced Ibbetson to leave his beloved retreat, and settle at Masham in Yorkshire, where he was much esteemed, and employed by gentlemen in the neighbourhood; which, with commissions from London, and from his former friends in the Scottish metropolis, occupied the remainder of his life. Just previous to his quitting Westmoreland, his younger daughter was born, who inherits, in an eminent degree, her father's talent for sketching, &c.

In the retirement of a small town in Yorkshire, few circumstances arose to interrupt his tranquillity. Years glided away in comfort, though not in affluence. It required the strictest economy, consistent with the appearance of a professional man, to retrieve his circumstances, after the severe losses he had sustained through Vernon's failure.

In 1817, whilst painting a favourite hunter for Lady Augusta Milbanke, he took cold, which settled upon his lungs, and terminated his existence on the 13th of October.

INTRODUCTION.

It will naturally be expected that I should give some account of the manner in which I acquired a sufficient knowledge of the mechanical part of painting, (to which I shall entirely confine myself,) to enable me to communicate with confidence the result of my observations and practice, which has been exceedingly varied and extensive, comprehending nearly every thing that ever was done in the whole range of the art. Now, to do that properly, I ought to give a short sketch of my life, which may, perhaps, need an *apology*, as certain works of the kind are humorously called ; but I will not impose it on the world at present, it belonging more immediately to a work for which I have collected a prodigious quantity of materials, and which I have received great encouragement to bring forward : it is, *Anecdotes of Picture-dealers, Picture-dealing, and Pictures ;* and will be intitled, *Humbuggologia.*

I shall merely say at present, that, having from my earliest youth had a most violent propensity, or inclination to the art, without ever meeting with instruction, encouragement, or patronage, I at last, on making my way to London, found myself safely moored in a picture-dealer's garret.

It was generally supposed, in *those days*, that none but the lowest mechanics were calculated for the profession of picture-dealing; and I believe it right, they all seemed so perfectly at home in it. I saw a little shoemaker, who made a fortune in the most agreeable manner imaginable, laughing heartily all the while. He brought up his son to the business.

There was also a house-painter and slater, who could repeat all the cant of connoisseurship, and talk of the *picturestio* with the most profound gravity; and he really had a considerable share of knowledge outside of his head, by which he realized a considerable fortune, with which, I believe, he built a Methodist chapel.

Another very worthy, industrious man, who assisted his wife (an eminent washerwoman) in mangling and carrying home the linen, took to the calling, and was very fortunate indeed; kept cash at the banker's instead of pawnbroker's; condemned and approved pictures in the most decisive manner; and, what is more strange, was really respectable.

Two others whom I knew, got into vast repute, with regular *customers to their backs*, who dealt with them as with their cheesemonger, and took their articles upon their word;—who had risen fairly in the corps by merit; who had been in the situation of jackal to the rest; and got on, by degrees, to be puffs, trumpeters, and, at last, importers *of*, and dealers in But the pickings got by this traffic were soon found to be of such consequence, that those plebeians were no longer to enjoy an exclusive right to hum the world. People in very different situations of life to those, were tempted to embark in the *trade*, one great qualification for which, and, indeed, the *sine qua non*, is, “not to admire;” the least taste or feeling would spoil all. What tobacco-merchant ever got less money because he hated the commodity in which he dealt, and neither could smoke, chew, nor snuff? But I shall say no more, just now, of the great Drawcansirs, who are of the Board

of Control, but shall expect to see the whole nation one great 'Change of picture-dealers.

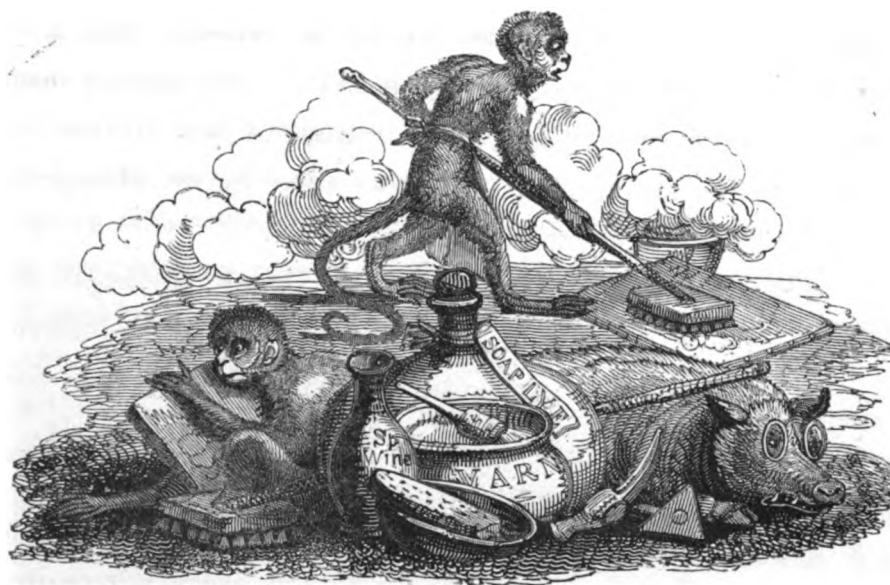
It is from this period I must date the first knowledge I ever acquired of the mechanical part of painting; and it was chiefly in the Dutch and Flemish schools, to which, as Sir Joshua Reynolds observes, a student should go to learn painting, as he should go to a grammar-school to learn language. He also adds, that, by a few hours' attentive observation of their method, he may make himself master of what cost them whole ages, or perhaps a succession of ages, to ascertain with such precision. Now, though I am certain it is impossible to acquire it with so little trouble, and that great man himself, throughout his whole life, was unwearied in traversing a pathless wilderness of colours, varnishes, and methods, and never found it at all, which is a misfortune exceedingly to be lamented: yet I believe it is only to be found there, and then only by such opportunities as I met with. It is well known, that he often destroyed good pictures of the Venetian school, by scraping off the different coats or glazings, to find out their system of painting: and a system they all decidedly had, there can be no manner of doubt. I had a better opportunity:—"good comes out of every thing." I, by looking over the intelligent being, when it was *scouring day*, had the pleasure of seeing all the different coats or strata of a variety of pictures vanish one after the other, from the epidermis, or last transparent finishing, down to the raw dead colouring, beyond which he seldom ventured. But I am under the greatest obligations to my dear old departed friend, John Evans, for going still further: he certainly was, in his time, the first of all possible grubbers; though I believe, in the present day, we do not want "five hundred good as he." He, by means of a brick (a delicate malmstock, observe) and water only, used to let me see on what coloured *grounds* the ancients all painted:

he fetched off every thing, except here and there a stubborn bit of heightening. Mr. Peter Brozet, another of those notables, did the same thing; but could not, for his life, make his work so *smooth* as John: he was of the good old sect of sand and scrubbing brush, and has numerous followers. However, the prevailing schism of the searching soap-lye, which finishes, the canvass and all, bids fair to become the rage, and has my sincere wishes on its side.

I was much employed in repairing the mischiefs of those scrubbers, and became exceedingly expert at it, and, of course, a valuable fixture in the concern; but I found an extreme difficulty in matching the tints, especially in the transparent parts, the common colour of the shops appearing like *gritty mud*, upon the mellow, transparent shades of the exquisite pictures of the last age: every one of the painters, I am certain, having studied the nature, and been the preparers of their own colours, and having been in possession of some vehicle or substance, by means of which they could make every colour transparent, and at the same time lie on plump, and remain so, without running, or appearing meagre or oily.

Innumerable were the experiments which I made, in hopes of coming at this: at last I found it, and it is invaluable. I gave it a ludicrous appellation, *Gumtion*, which it now universally bears; although very few to whom I communicated it, have remembered how to make it properly, as it is difficult in the preparation, and requires great nicety to bring it to the exact consistence required for use. By means of this, and an accurate examination of the appearance of system, which I saw every where in the works of the best masters, I was enabled to repair and imitate the works of any of them, although ever so exquisite; and it affords me great pleasure, at times, to see my works of that kind in the collections of those *illuminati*, who have been taught, by picture-dealers, to affect a most sovereign contempt for every *modern artist* and his works: these old clothesmen of the

arts having no other way of keeping their *customers*, than decrying the works of the present age, which abounds with excellent artists in every line, far beyond all precedent; and who would meet with the patronage they deserve, but for those cankerworms and their vamped up trumpery.



AN

ACCIDENCE, &c.

OF THE

MATERIALS, GROUNDS, &c.

THE cloths used at present for painting upon, are prepared in the worst and most dangerous manner imaginable *. The colourmen, to whom every thing is left, begin by brushing the cloth over with strong glue, to lay the flue, and prevent its absorbing any oil, as I suppose: then, with stiff paint, the greatest part of which is whiting, they plaster over the glue twice, seldom three times; it is then done, when the *exciseman* has stamped it. In a very short space of time, if kept in rolls, it gets so brittle, that it would be as easy to unfold a manuscript of Herculaneum as this, without breaking or cracking in ten thousand places. If the picture be hung in a damp place, it comes off altogether, in great flakes; and in time, with the greatest care, it becomes covered with circular cracks, like net-work, for which there is no remedy. It ought to be prepared with very thin starch, and rubbed while wet with a rubber-stone, to lay the flue smooth, and painted with proper thin colour several times: when the paint unites with the canvass, it is flexible, will never crack, and will endure for ages. In Holland, and even Dublin, their cloths are far superior, and very pliable. Wood, well prepared, oak or mahogany, is very durable: the Dutch have prepared them with whiting and size, which has been the destruction of

* The preparation of canvass is now so superior to what it was twenty-five years since, that the student need not feel any apprehension of meeting with it, of most excellent quality, at the shop of any respectable colourman.

many fine pictures. Van Goyen and others have prepared, or filled up the pores, with their transparent vehicle, which also enabled them to show the grain of the wood through the shades of the subject ; but the best way I have found, after trying every thing, is this :—Procure, at a common colour-shop, a quantity of what is called by the house-painters, *flatting*, which is white lead, ground with a large proportion of spirits of turpentine. Stir a small quantity of strong drying oil well among it ; then take as much as will do for present use, and mix it to a proper consistence with spirits of turpentine, and lay on the pannel with a brush, leaving the brush-marks the same way with the grain of the wood : when dry, in a day or two, take some of the stiff colour, and plaster it all over with a pallet-knife, and take it off again as clean as possible with the knife, and sufficient is left to fill up the pores of the wood and marks of the brush. This repeated two or three times, leaves a most beautiful face, and very hard ; and it will never crack, or separate from the wood whilst it endures.

The canvass, such as it is, must be rubbed well with powdered pumice-stone and sponge, with very little water, until the water adheres to it all over, and the repulsion or sassing is removed ; then I take a burnt terra de sienna cake of water-colour, and rub a little, sufficient to cover with a sponge the whole canvass and give it a glow of warmth. Let that dry, and make out the design complete with a tint of Vandyck brown (water-colour) and a large camel-hair pencil, which the canvass will then receive as well as the best drawing paper ; when dry, rub all over with a piece of sponge and a very little linseed oil, by which it is fixed, and ready for immediately proceeding on to painting ; and, however you rub in or out, you still find your design safe. The ancients painted on a variety of grounds ; but the tan-colour seems to be the most general, and is very pleasing to work upon. Berghem, Wynants, Wouvermans, Moucheron, and many others, made use of no other ; and, by means of their transparency, the effect is truly fascinating, but difficult to copy. The best pictures of Teniers are upon white grounds : in earlier pictures he used dark brown grounds, the same as his father, and they are very inferior. It is said of him, that he had his colours ground fresh every day, and there is every appearance of that being the case : his touching in every part is so exquisitely clean and sharp, there is no possibility of handling being carried further.

The Venetians painted with water or size colour, and often began from the bare

canvass. It is exceedingly durable when used with parchment-size, the same with which carvers lay the whiting ground for burnished gold. Paul Veronese, I am certain, painted in that manner, and made out his pictures with white, and its shades, and then tinted it with repeated glazings in oil or varnish colours. I had a picture of his, in a deplorable situation, to repair, more than twenty years ago; when I found that to be the case beyond a doubt. I set it to rights with water-colours, and found it to correspond exactly: some pieces which were broken off were still soluble in hot water, as I found upon trial; the size had been so strong as to prevent the varnish from being absorbed. The Bassans also painted in the same way; and Roos, or Rosa Tivoli, painted almost entirely in size. It is rather strange that Sir Joshua, in his innumerable experiments, should never have hit upon size colours, they being instantly dry, and, however loaded, would always remain firm. The raised work on old japan clock-cases, &c. are done in the same way, and are almost indestructible. I have also seen grounds which have been gilt, silvered, &c. but they have only been of the egregious school of the *Nigglewigs**.

* I cannot help here recounting the fate of one of the most extraordinary productions of the Nigglewigg, and in which they were all supposed to be concerned. Colliveau, a celebrated picture-cleaner and mender, many years ago, who was by no means *afraid* of a picture, never suffered the owners of them to approach his sanctum, where he scoured without mercy; but was always ready to show himself, one sleeve entirely covered with needles of all sizes, with the points of which, he assured his employers, he had been picking the dirt from their pictures, at the hazard of his eye-sight. He always brought out with him a handful of the finest lancets and other instruments, used for the same purpose, as he told them; but, as he had been interrupted, he always returned with tenfold rage to his scrubbing-brush and scrapers, his sand and soap-lye. He had (not very fairly) become the possessor of a very exquisite picture, which, whoever saw it, swore was ten times more highly finished than Vanderheyden. In the distance was a chateau of brick, the joints of which could not be equalled by the finest engraving: there were innumerable circumstances, also, which could not be discovered but by a glass; such as snails crawling up the wall, whose shells were charmingly dappled, &c.

Colliveau set about this picture with uncommon solemnity, because it was his own. He began with the most delicate pumice-stone, and very soon got into the walls of the building; but was astonished to find the appearance of bricks and mortar still, although not quite so neat. He soon cleared away the wall, on discovering a room beyond, and pictures, furniture, &c. most beautiful. Gracious powers! how was he agitated: forgetting totally the mischief he was committing, his elbow went like a fiddler's: every thing

OF OILS, VARNISH, &c.

I DO not allow of any other oil than linseed, of which I make my gumtion, and which I have tried at least twenty-four years, in sun, light, and shade, and find far superior to any other. Hemp oil, which is used at present by the Dutch, does not dry very hard, but is a good colour. Poppy oil turns black in time; and real nut-oil never dries so hard but that turpentine will bring it off. Linseed improves by time, and, when combined in gumtion, bleaches white in a very few days, as far as the light penetrates through it, although ever so yellow before. You will also want drying oil and mastic varnish, to make Megilp, so called, I do not know why; a substance originally hit upon by a surgeon of Liverpool, when making salve. It answers as a meagre gumtion, which dries too soon; but must serve until I get some one to prepare mine properly for the public. No colourman will: it is an innovation. They know best, and artists should be contented with what they please to give them.

vanished. However, finding a bed, the curtains of which (a dark green) were drawn close, he went to work upon it very tenderly. Presently a pot de chambre came in sight! His whole soul was absorbed; his face all one ghastly grin; his legs (like German flutes) tottered under him. Not that great philosopher Guffin Ragbag, was more agitated while cutting the leather from off his bellows, to discover how wind was made, than was Monsieur Colliveau while scouring off the bed-clothes. At last he found a lady asleep, very beautiful, because very fat, and a Dutch woman. Now this part I did not see, and I believe but very few besides himself. But, alas! he was soon to be at the end of his discoveries. Having got a glimpse of some gilding, he redoubled his efforts, when he found it was an inscription: it was in Dutch, and nearly thus, as translated by Mr. Peter La Cave:—"Now, caitiff, meditate on the havoc thou hast made throughout thy life, and go hang thyself. In this picture, wretch! thou hast destroyed what, to the end of the world, can never be replaced." Poor Colliveau, for the first time in his life, felt compunction for the destruction of a picture, and did not hang himself; but took a whole pound of snuff the same day, it is said, and was suffocated. The inscription was signed Dirk. Hendric. Doz. Nigglewig; of all the family, I never remember seeing *his* name to any other picture.

MASTIC VARNISH is made by melting one pound of mastic with three pints of etherial spirits of turpentine, which may be had at Apothecaries' Hall; and if the soft tears of the mastic are picked out, it will never chill. It must be covered close, and shook round the earthen pan it is made in; but by no means uncovered, although the fume of it may take fire: to prevent which, let a double brown paper be tied close over the vessel, and wetted with a sponge, which should be kept full of water, ready to extinguish the flames if the fume of the turpentine should take fire.

DRYING OIL.—The very best pale is made by boiling linseed oil in an earthen pan, at the bottom of which white lead is spread a quarter of an inch thick. Do not stir it at all until it turns to a brown ash-colour, when it will have imbibed a sufficient quantity of lead to turn the mastic varnish and itself into a stiff jelly; which make thus: Pour into a cup three parts mastic and one part drying oil, stir them together very quickly, and leave them, as much stirring prevents its ever setting.

Spirits of turpentine you must also be provided with, merely to wash out your pencils: have a little tin pot to slip on your easel-pin to the right.

OF COLOURS.

IN my system I use very few colours; and I am convinced the simplicity of it is its greatest value or recommendation. It holds good in mechanics, and in every other art. Not but that I have tried every thing I could possibly procure; but it was only to discover what numberless trumpery colours there are, totally useless, unless to make a figure in the windows and bills of colourmen.

White, of course, is a principal thing, but is never used pure, at least with propriety, in any case; unless as a heightening to polished metals, or water reflecting the sun. White lead is the only white we have of sufficient body to use in oil. White has been

made from zinc, but it has not sufficient substance. I have a white, which I believe to be permanent in water, (it has now stood six years,) made by a decomposition of metalline salts; but, although it has a good body, it has not sufficient for oil. Flake white, which is the best, is only white lead finely washed. I always bring it down with Naples yellow, to the colour of cream or masticot, before I place it on my pallet. There is nothing so much to be avoided as black and white.



YELLOW.—I use Naples yellow for the bright: it is the only safe bright yellow. All the arsenical preparations, orpiment, king's yellow, and the patent yellow, though made of lead, are dangerous; for, although some of them may keep their colour for a time alone, yet, when used with others, they inevitably destroy them.



Terra de Sienna is the most valuable of all yellows: it is unchangeable; will bear the action of the sun for a century, either raw or calcined: it has been always the principal foundation of landscape-painting, down to Zuccarelli. Vostermans and Pynacker, particularly, used no other. It possesses the most perfect transparency in both states, when finely ground, and sets aside the necessity of many colours which are generally used. An astonishing variety of greens and browns may be made from it with blue only.



I make a stronger yellow than Naples, to answer to ochre, of unburnt terra de Sienna and Naples; as the terra itself has a warmth a degree beyond perfect yellow, rather tending to orange: this is the yellow - - - - -



RED.—I use vermilion sometimes, in faces and figures, and of that, the factitious stands best. This is good: the sun in length of time turns it black, unless used with a quantity of gumtion



LIGHT RED, so called, is either calcined green vitriol mixed with a quantity of other substance, and called Venetian red; or calcined yellow ochre, which I prefer. The first will stand its colour, and is what is used by the earthenware painters, for the warm red in china, &c. and remains exactly the same after being burnt in; but rather runs, and works greasy, in oil.



LAKE RED is necessary in some cases: it will not bear the action of the sun for any length of time. It is a pity no substitute has yet been found of mineral colour. I have a red which answers the purpose of Indian red, and mixes to a beautiful pink flesh. I have used it many years, and call it carbonic red, being found in thin strata in the coal mines of Westmoreland. I hope to be able to get a sufficient supply in time, for the public.



BLUE.—The best is ultramarine, which is unchangeable, but expensive. It is made of the beautiful marble called *lapis lazuli*, which ranks among precious stones, and the preparation is difficult; but it is now to be had in perfection, of Middleton, in St. Martin's Lane. Quarries of this precious substance have been discovered in the

Russian territories, bordering on Persia. A Russian agent was some years ago in London, who offered to procure it in quantities, five hundred weight, if wanted; but could get no orders; until Middleton, who has great spirit, and knowledge of colours, has undertaken the manufactory of it, and has it of all degrees of value or depth. I have used his middling sort, which is excellent for landscape. Claude Loraine never used any other blue: he made even his greens and neutral tint of it, quite to the fore-ground. Before the discovery of Prussian blue, by a chemist of Berlin, a blue was very much wanted. Antwerp blue, which is nothing more than chalk dyed by the silver refiners' waste liquor, has spoiled innumerable pictures, and is the reason of that brown, yellow, and grey, which we see in Van Goyen and others; all the freshness being vanished with the blue. Indigo was also used; a dull, fleeting colour.

Prussian blue does very well; but for skies it wants breaking with a quantity of lake, as thus, which brings it very near ultramarine.

For other uses, such as mixing greens and neutral tint, it may be introduced as you find it: it will not stand very long in the sun.

BLACK I never use at all; not but that it is of use in painting portraits, for back-grounds, draperies, &c.: but, notwithstanding scarcely any other branch of the art is encouraged, as may be seen by the inundation of portraits, or pot-boilers, at the exhibition every year, I shall not treat of it at all. A single object for ever

repeated, and always painted from nature, ought never to be ill done; but we always see a very great proportion of bad ones. Gainsborough, the charming landscape-painter, was necessitated to take to portrait painting; and when he was questioned why he did it, answered, "to make the pot boil;" from that they have the name. Had there been any other way of making the pot boil, what noble historical pictures! what numerous charming landscapes we should have had, by Sir Joshua and Gainsborough.

Bones calcined in a crucible, closely covered with sand, or what is called ivory black, is good, but dries slowly. According as they are longer calcined they become of a colder or blue tint; but no truly aërial tint can be made with black.

As there are no other colours in nature or in light, than red, blue, and yellow, and their different combinations, of green, purple, orange, &c.; so a mixture of them, in which no one predominates in the least, is real shade and air; and as alkali and acid neutralize each other, so do colours of the most violent contrast or opposition. Thus, with red and blue, with a small proportion of yellow, I make a universal shade or neutral tint, which harmonizes with every thing, and is the master key for coming at nature in landscape painting. The specimen opposite is of that without white.



Warmth, or a tint made of red and yellow, so exactly combined that neither predominates, is the next valuable thing. These two tints only, after the sky is done, being capable of bringing forward every object in nature quite to the fore-ground, very nearly perfect.



Burnt terra de Sienna answers to the same warmth as a glazing colour in finishing: and Vandyck brown, or terra de Castel, with blue, makes the neutral transparent finishing tint, with which every thing may be strengthened and made out near the fore-ground. All the variety of greens may be made out in glazing by raw terra de Sienna and blue; and may be assisted still darker and more perfect by the addition of brown pink, which will stand its colour out of the sun. It is made of a strong decoction of French berries, evaporated to dryness.

VANDYCK BROWN has been made great use of by him, Reubens, and particularly Rembrandt: it will stand very well, although nothing more than the fine sediment of the waters of peat-moss. It burns to white ashes, and in burning the smell discovers what it is. It should be ground with strong drying oil, as well as the brown pink, when they will both dry.

With the colours already mentioned, opake and transparent, it is possible to imitate exactly every picture, and every possible effect of nature. It is the *alphabet*, which will serve every one to express his ideas, however various they may be; and I expect no greater credit than any other Abecedarian. The same alphabet served John Bunyan and Dr. Johnson; but they could not have written without one. However, music existed before gamuts, and languages were *spoken* long before grammars and alphabets were invented.



OF MANNERS.

OF the endless variety of manner, I shall only select for my present purpose those of Claude and Cuyp; to which may be added Mompert, who imitated the luminous aerial tint of nature, beyond any other, in my opinion. Their choice of circumstance is almost always the same; i. e. the sun supposed to be only just out of the picture, and looking towards it. Nothing can be more different, at the same time, than the method they took to express the same thing.

Claude began by laying in his picture in flat masses of neutral tint, exactly the depth of the shade intended, in opaque colour. He makes no use of his ground, (a dingy red,) but covers it completely. He painted the æther of his sky perfect at the same time; but without clouds, and considerably lighter than he finished. All that being dry, he finished his sky by glazing the upper part with ultramarine, and softening down to the horizon, with its vapour, with a thin body of colour; in and on which, while wet, he painted his clouds. He finished his distances in the same manner, with neutral tints, heightening with a more solid body of colour; but the air-tint he leaves, in some degree, quite to the fore-ground, perfectly agreeable to nature, as may be seen any fine morning, in England, as well as in Italy. In tinted drawings, no one, I believe, ever came so near the tint of nature as Mr. John Smith: they will always retain their value, when the dashing, doubtful style has been long exploded, in which every thing appears like a confused dream of nature. It is the finishing of Claude that yields so easy to the Brozettan mode: those *Sangradi* always proceeding in the same manner in all cases, without a possibility of knowing how a picture has been painted; which ought, as the constitution, to be the first thing studied, or destruction inevitably follows. This is the reason why we so often see Claude flayed to the quick. Sir George Beaumont, however, whose superior knowledge of painting, as an artist and as a connoisseur, is so universally acknowledged, is in possession of most charming specimens of Claude, which show what he is when perfect.

Cuyp began with a set of tints, the same as those with which Claude ends; with their proper heightenings growing out of them, and only a little lighter and warmer; all neutral and ærial, and painted quite solid. He finishes with a universal glaze of glowing warmth, which brings the grey tints and their warm heightenings into wonderful harmony. We see Cuyp also deprived of his surtout by these Huns, and he is still charming; and in this state yields only to the Evanian brick-bat. I know I have not got out of my depth, and speak with confidence, because I have so often seen them dissected and anatomized. Mompert painted exactly on the same system, but in a manner far more careless and loose. There is a painter who imitates Cuyp in a surprising manner at present; (I believe, on the Continent.) Mr. Bryant has, or had, some of them. I saw one or two in collections in Lancashire, but I do not know for certain whether they are *always* sold for originals. However, the purchaser would not be much hurt were that the case: it is only in this degraded state that modern artists are suffered by the dealers. I have seen the finest pictures of Wilson and Vernet, turned out of the collection of a nobleman, now no more; at whose instigation, would be no difficult matter to guess.

To the ladies I should wish particularly to recommend this. The dread they have of oil colours I should wish to eradicate, and show how easily and clean it might be practised. The sensible and accomplished ladies of the North are already convinced; an incredible number of whom paint surprisingly well.

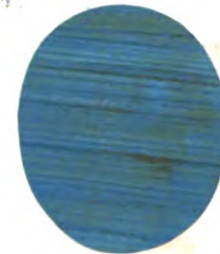
To artists I have nothing to say; but, that I am their very obedient, humble servant, &c. I have no doubt, but that they have all encountered difficulties; and every one esteems his own as the best of all possible methods, which I am very ready to believe; but as no one ever thought proper to tell the world how to set about it, before I did, I hope that candour, which they *all* possess in so eminent a degree, will not let them turn my attempt into ridicule; that they will be *as tender as possible* of me; and, in return, I will give them a piece of advice, as I were on my death-bed:—To avoid Picture-dealers as serpents: they are, to living artists, as hawks to singing birds. I would advise them also, to study landscape at *some little distance* from the smoke of London.

EXAMPLE.

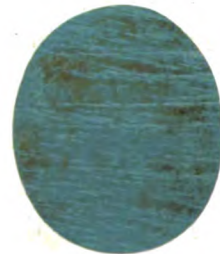
WHEN I begin a picture, I mix a quantity of the highest heightening of the cloud, no matter whether warm or silvery, with which every other tint must be mixed; and it must answer the purpose of white in every other part of the picture, except in the following tint.



I then mix the highest, or bluest part of the sky, with white and the broken blue only: as thus - - - - -



I then mix the two together, to form a middle tint for the sky, which may be wrought together with the brightest, until it all harmonize to the top of the picture.



Afterwards, I mix a tint for the darkest part of the cloud I shall make use of, of the middle tint and the neutral tint; which will work into the flat part of the sky, as strong or as tender as you wish for it, or as is required; then heighten with the lightest or first.



The neutral tint is then mixed to the depth of the furthest distance, which is often lighter than the shade of the cloud, in the same manner, only with the addition of the smallest portion of warmth, added as it comes darker and nearer the foreground ;



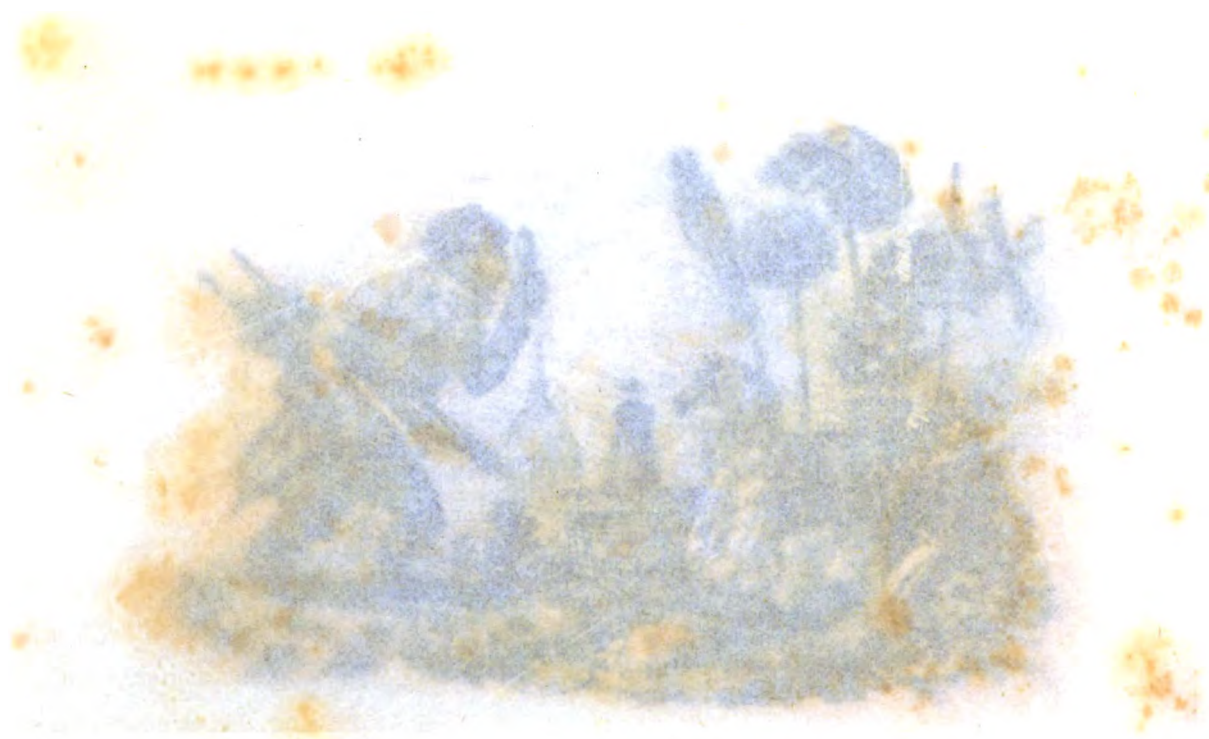
the heightening to which is the middle tint of sky, with more warmth only. The specimens need not be multiplied ; these two will serve to show the flat distance, and its heightening upon the scale begun : more neutral tint, and more warmth, only bringing every thing forward quite to the foreground.



The foregoing example is merely intended for the same purpose as those lessons are, of one syllable, which follow the alphabet, in learning to read : of course, the student must find out the more difficult combinations progressively. It will show the use, and also the propriety, of the title I have given to this lesson, which is meant only for *beginners* ; and my intention will be answered, if it saves them the smallest portion of that precious time of life, for the loss of which I always feel the most agonizing sensations ; and, as the reader must have observed, I cannot, for my life, help expressing the utmost indignation at the selfish, ignorant, unfeeling causes of it ; and, that

“ Trade’s unfeeling train”

should set up for the arbiters of taste, and live luxuriously out of works of art ; for which they feel the same affection *as a butcher does for a fat ox.*



The neutral tint is then mixed to the depth of the furthest distance, which is often lighter than the shade of the cloud, in the same manner, only with the addition of the smallest portion of warmth, added as it comes darker and nearer the foreground;



should set up for the distance, and they are continuously added as they feel the same affection *as a butcher does for a fat ox.*



APPENDIX.

DURING THE LAST TWENTY YEARS OF HIS LIFE, IBBETSON'S COLOURS WERE
PREPARED IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER.

To vermilion add nearly an equal quantity of sugar of lead, and grind them together. The sugar of lead prevents the vermilion from becoming hard.

To Prussian-blue, one fourth sugar of lead, and the same of gum mastic.

Raw and burnt terra de Sienna, yellow ochre, lake, white lead, Naples yellow*, and Vandyke brown, should be mixed with about one sixth part sugar of lead: all to be ground very fine, in the newest raw linseed oil.

The Vandyke brown, when used as a glazing, or transparent colour, must be mixed with Megilp.

* In grinding this colour, it is necessary to scrape it off the marble slab with an ivory or horn knife, or a piece of horn, such as is used for the lights of common lanterns; as a steel knife gives a blackness to the colour, which destroys its brilliancy.

THE GUMTION.

Take half an ounce of gum mastic, and carefully pick and scrape off every particle of sand or other matter which adheres to it. Add to it a little more than one-third sugar of lead; in *quantity*, not *weight*, as the sugar of lead is much heavier than the gum mastic. Grind them together in raw linseed oil. In a short time it will become quite stiff; then add more oil, to make it so thin that it will spread and run on the slab. Take it up into a pot, and grind it again very fine, putting only a small quantity on the slab at once; after which, if it should seem too stiff for use, put a little more oil, and grind it again slightly. A good deal depends upon practice, in preparing Gumption, as well as other paints; but they cannot be ground too fine.

Mixed with Gumption, every colour becomes more or less transparent. To the lower part of the sky, and distant mountains, for instance, may be given the indistinct hazy appearance so frequently observed in nature, and so difficult to imitate in any other way, by glazing over, after the first colour is dry, with the middle tint of the sky mixed with Gumption, and softened with a badger and camel-hair brush. In the same manner, all the various mixtures of rich greens, browns, &c. may be made transparent, and used as glazing colours over the neutral and warm tints with which the design is made out in opaque colour.

TO CLEAN OLD PICTURES, WHICH ARE MUCH LOADED WITH DIRT AND
VARIOUS VARNISHES.

Mix equal quantities of spirits of wine and turpentine, adding a little salt of tartar. Have ready several small pieces of flannel, and a little fine olive oil.

Shake the vial containing the mixture, and pour on the picture as much as will cover a few square inches. Rub it about quickly with a piece of flannel, and instantly put on a little olive oil with another piece of flannel, which will stop the action of the spirits, and give an opportunity of ascertaining whether all the varnish and dirt have been removed. So proceed all over the picture, which may be afterwards washed with a sponge in soap and water, then with clean water; dried, and varnished with mastic varnish, which is the best, as, after any length of time, it may be rubbed off with the fingers, and with it all smoke and film from the surface of pictures which have been varnished with that only.

Where the canvass is decayed or torn, the picture, after being cleaned, may be put upon new in the following manner:—

Take some *thin* glue size, and make a paste with it and some good wheat flour, which is best used fresh and warm.

The picture to be lined, must be cut a little smaller than a frame on which it is to be stretched, that the edges may not leave the new canvass after it is done. If there is any hole or fracture in the picture, or if the paint is perishing and loose on the canvass, paper should be pasted over it in front, previous to its being laid down. Wet a place on a deal table, a smooth floor, or any other flat surface of sufficient size, and lay the picture on it, with the face downwards, and brush the back of it well with paste all over: then take a piece of soft new canvass, or coarse unbleached cloth, so much larger than the picture as to allow of its being nailed over the edges of the stretching-frame, and tack it to the table or floor upon which the picture is laid, stretching and nailing it over the picture on all sides, as tight and square as possible. After this, take a thick piece of board, rounded at the edges, and with it rub very hard all over the picture, to make the paste come through the new canvass:

when this is done, and it is dry enough not to stick to a hot smoothing iron, it must be well smoothed all over; taking care not to let the iron rest for a moment, as the shape of it would be indelibly fixed on the picture.

When it is pretty dry, but before it gets quite hard, take out the tacks, raise the picture, and nail it on the stretching-frame. If the work has been properly performed, it will be found surprisingly flat and smooth. Great care is requisite to rub the paste thoroughly through the canvass in every part, to make the old adhere closely to the new. When dry, and nailed on the stretching-frame, the paper which was pasted on the front of the picture may be removed with a wet sponge. Any cracks or blemishes may be touched with a pencil and paint, and, when dry, the picture may be varnished.

If there are any large cracks after lining, a little of the paste may be made into a putty with finely powdered pipe-clay and a little drying oil, and scraped over them with a pallet-knife, wiping it off the surface with a wet sponge before they are touched with a pencil.

THE END.

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